

May 31, 2006

Senator Wesley Chesbro  
State Capitol, Room 5035  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member John Laird  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, Item 0520, Issue 500**

Dear Chairs Chesbro and Laird:

We respectfully request that you reconsider your action relating to \$5 million proposed in the Assembly version of the budget for implementation of the San Joaquin Valley Strategic Action Proposal of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (San Joaquin Partnership).

The San Joaquin Partnership was established by Executive Order in June of 2005 to make recommendations to the Governor regarding changes that would improve the economic well-being of this eight-county region, due to its extreme poverty and high unemployment levels.

The Congressional Research Service recently found the San Joaquin Valley is one of the most economically depressed areas of the country - the new Appalachia - where more than one in five residents lives in poverty. Strategic resources are often provided to historically underserved low-income areas of the state.

The San Joaquin Partnership brings eight state agency secretaries, local government leaders and private sector members together to develop regional solutions to serious issues facing the San Joaquin Valley:

- Unemployment rates 50 percent higher than the statewide average;
- One of the dirtiest air basins in the nation;
- High salinity and poor water quality; and
- Critical shortage of rural health care professionals.

The \$5 million commitment from the State serves as critical seed money for the San Joaquin Partnership's strategic action proposal. An improved San Joaquin Valley economy will generate more tax dollars for the state and reduce the number of people on state assistance.

**It is critical that funding for the implementation of the strategic action proposal be available in the 2006-07 budget.** Delaying funding for a year could mean many of the critical projects and opportunities to improve the region will be stalled or made redundant. Therefore, we urge your reconsideration of the \$5 million appropriation identified by Governor Schwarzenegger and supported by the Assembly.

Sincerely,

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Greg Aghazarian, Assemblymember

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Juan Arambula, Assemblymember

Dear Chairs Chesbro and Laird:  
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Dave Cogdill, Assemblymember

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Bill Maze, Assemblymember

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Barbara Matthews, Assemblymember

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Kevin McCarthy, Assemblymember

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Nicole Parra, Assemblymember

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Michael Villines, Assemblymember